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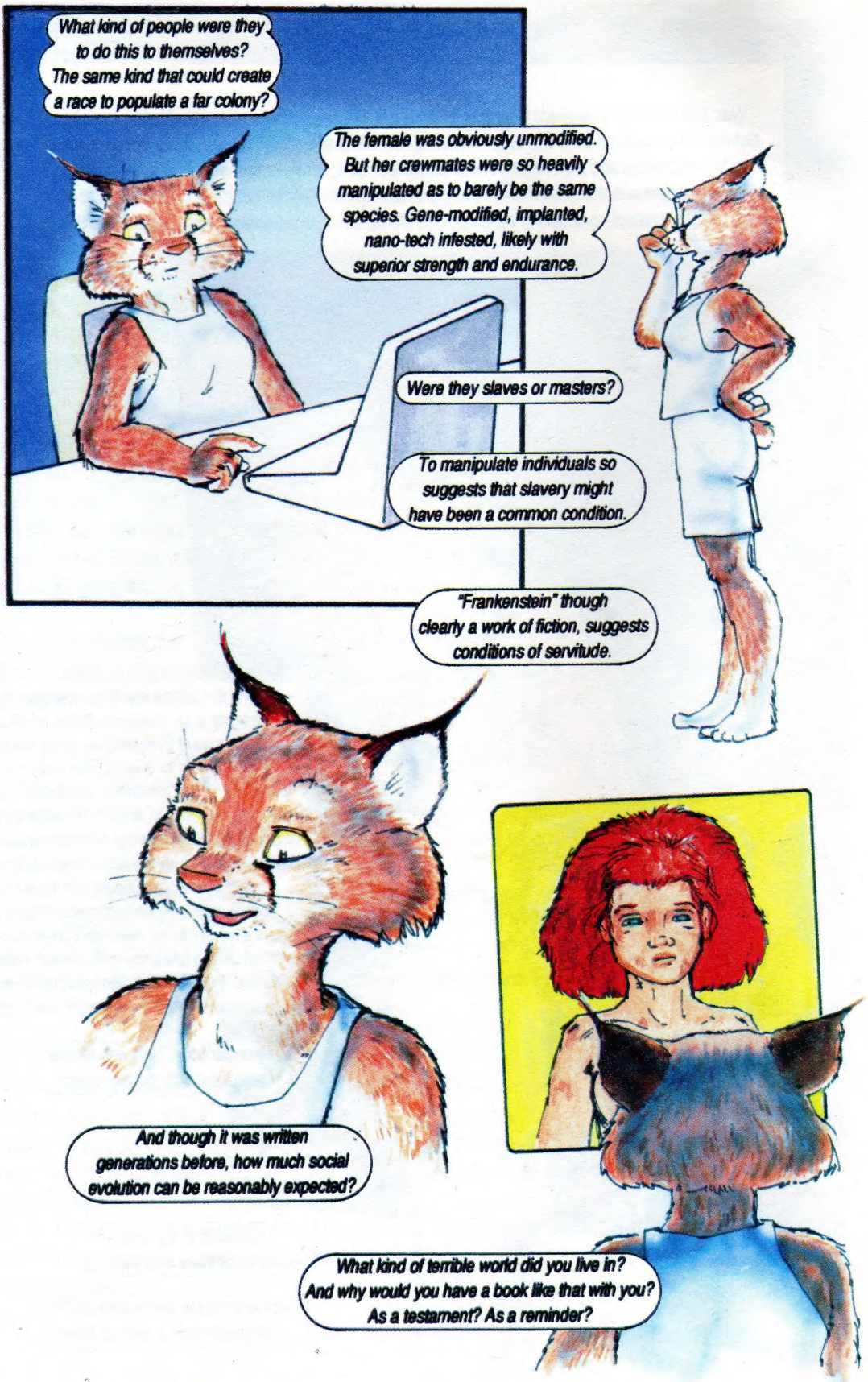
SD 201-01-02
War. The attack on Domthant III by ILR forces leave little doubt that a state of belligerency exists between The Confederation and Lapin Republic. The news of it ripples across known space, leaving in its wake shock and fear. And a level of confusion, as no terms or pronouncement, no goals or intents come with that news. EDF forces go to alert to the defense, but other than those action dictated by standing orders or existing policy, there is no indication as to what happens next.
The distressing war news is scarcely a distraction to Dr. Kalihahaii. Swept up into the inner circles of Enchawa Industries, she has only her work for comfort. And even that is disturbed by new information of duplicitous EDF security suppression of data. The alien starship discovered four years ago had much more in it then her initial investigation revealed. Three other bodies, superficially similar to the alien(human), were nevertheless different in ways important to her own race's origin and both had chilling relevance to the ancient book, entitled "Frankenstein" also found on the ship.
I wonder how Chani and Mother are doing with the war news?
I wonder if She knew of war?
Certainly in the time of the book there was warfare.
But how much can realistically can be drawn from a work of fiction?


What kind of people were they to do this to themselves? The same kind that could create a race to populate a far colony?
The female was obviously unmodified. But her crewmates were so heavily manipulated as to barely be the same species. Gene-modified, implanted, nano-tech infested, likely with superior strength and endurance.
Were they slaves or masters?
To manipulate individuals so suggests that slavery might have been a common condition.
"Frankenstein" though clearly a work of fiction, suggests conditions of servitude.
And though it was written generations before, how much social evolution can be reasonably expected?
What kind of terrible world did you live in? And why would you have a book like that with you? As a testament? As a reminder?

Computer? Has there been thoughts of Frankenstein being a cautionary tale?

A CAUTIONARY TALE?

Yes. Though the story was originally written as a fantasy in a pre-technic time, it remained as a reminder and a warning in a time where such monstrous potential had become possible.

THAT PERSPECTIVE HAS NOT BEEN PURSUED IN DEPTH.

Dussault here.

I heard your suggestion Dr. Kalihahaii. And while I'm aware of the risk of wishful thinking putting a bias on it, I do like the argument.

Thank you, Dr. Dussault.

The proposal of the aliens being malevolent to the welfare of the individual, creating gentetic social castes, has always been distasteful to me.

Especially in light of the obvious self-sacrifice of the female in her attempt to save the ship. If, in fact she did it in self-sacrifice, or as a conditioned response.

Yes, there is that too.

Yet, it seems inconsistent with a repressive society to keep such a book around.

Computer, anything to add?

NOT YET.

SOME GOOD ARGUMENTS THOUGH. I WILL BE PASSING THEM ON.

SOME NEWS FROM R&D. THEY HAVE A PRE-PRODUCTION MATTER ANNIHILATION PROPULSION UNIT RUNNING.

You're just in time.
They'll be firing it up in a few seconds.

Just between you and me, how far can it go?

In power output?
The main limitation is the mirror. Even with active cooling, practical thrust is only a couple thousand tons. We have tried ablative thrust plates, but they only last a few minutes at best, especially at higher settings. But we got a peak rate of eleven thousand tons on one run.

WARNING WARNING WARNING
DEVICE TEST IN TWENTY SECONDS

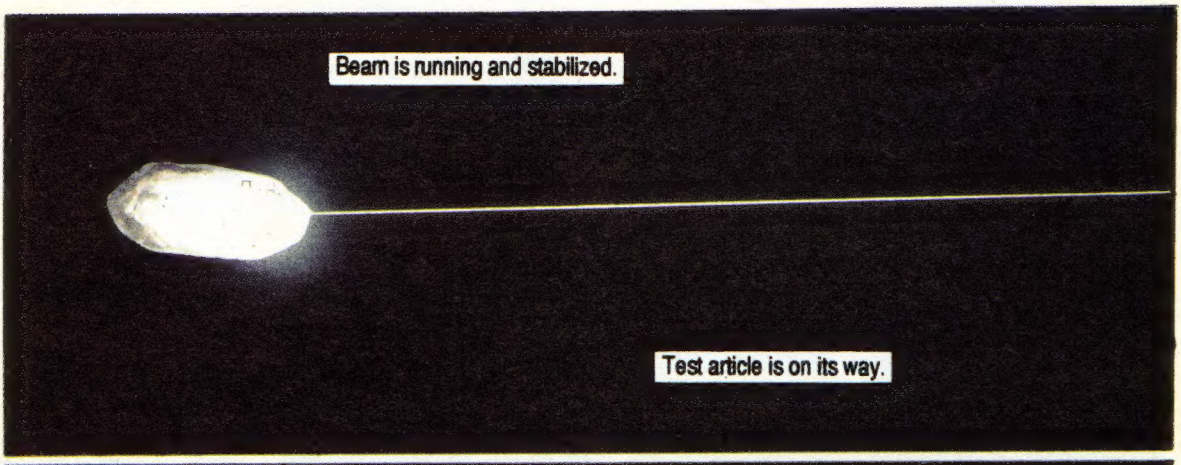
Here, you'll need these.

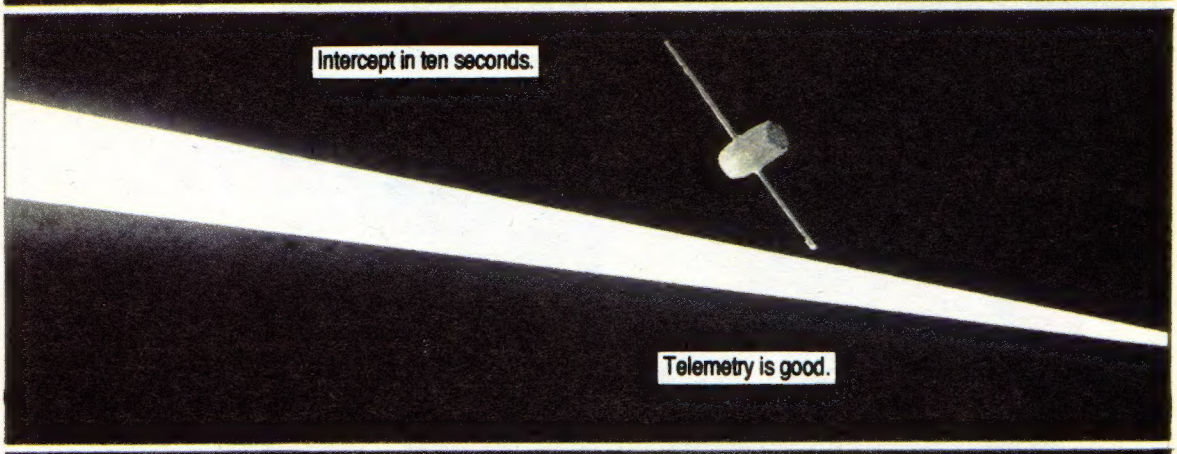
OUCH!

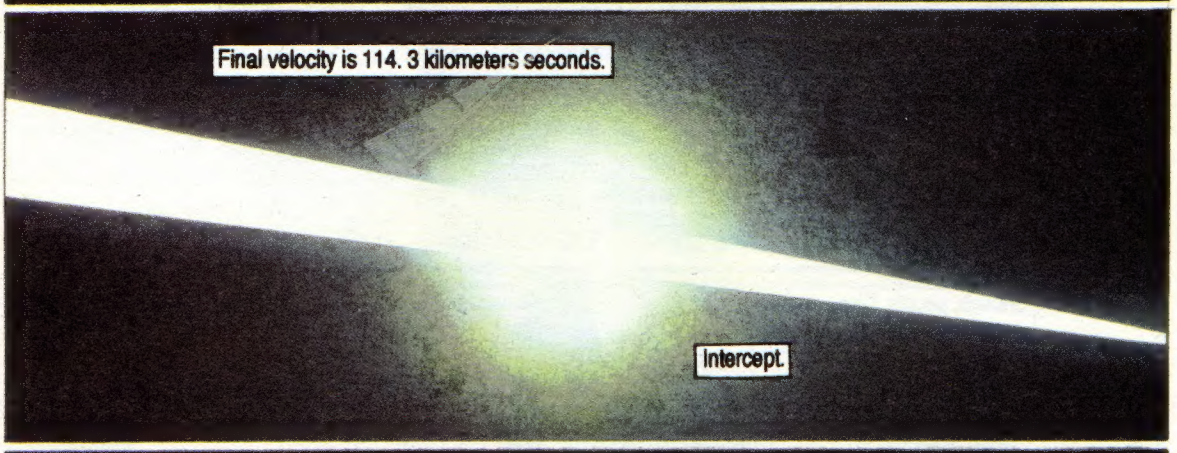
Yeah, it's really something.

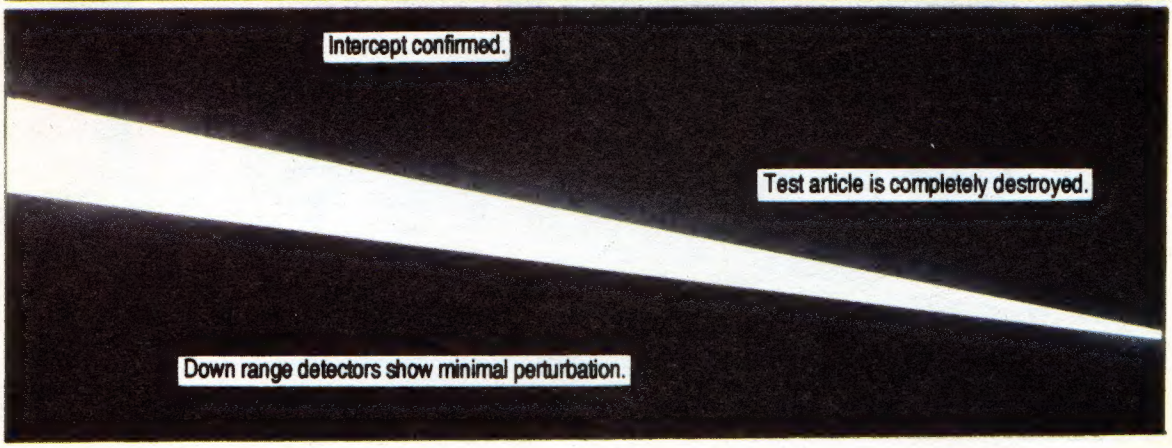
Is this full open?

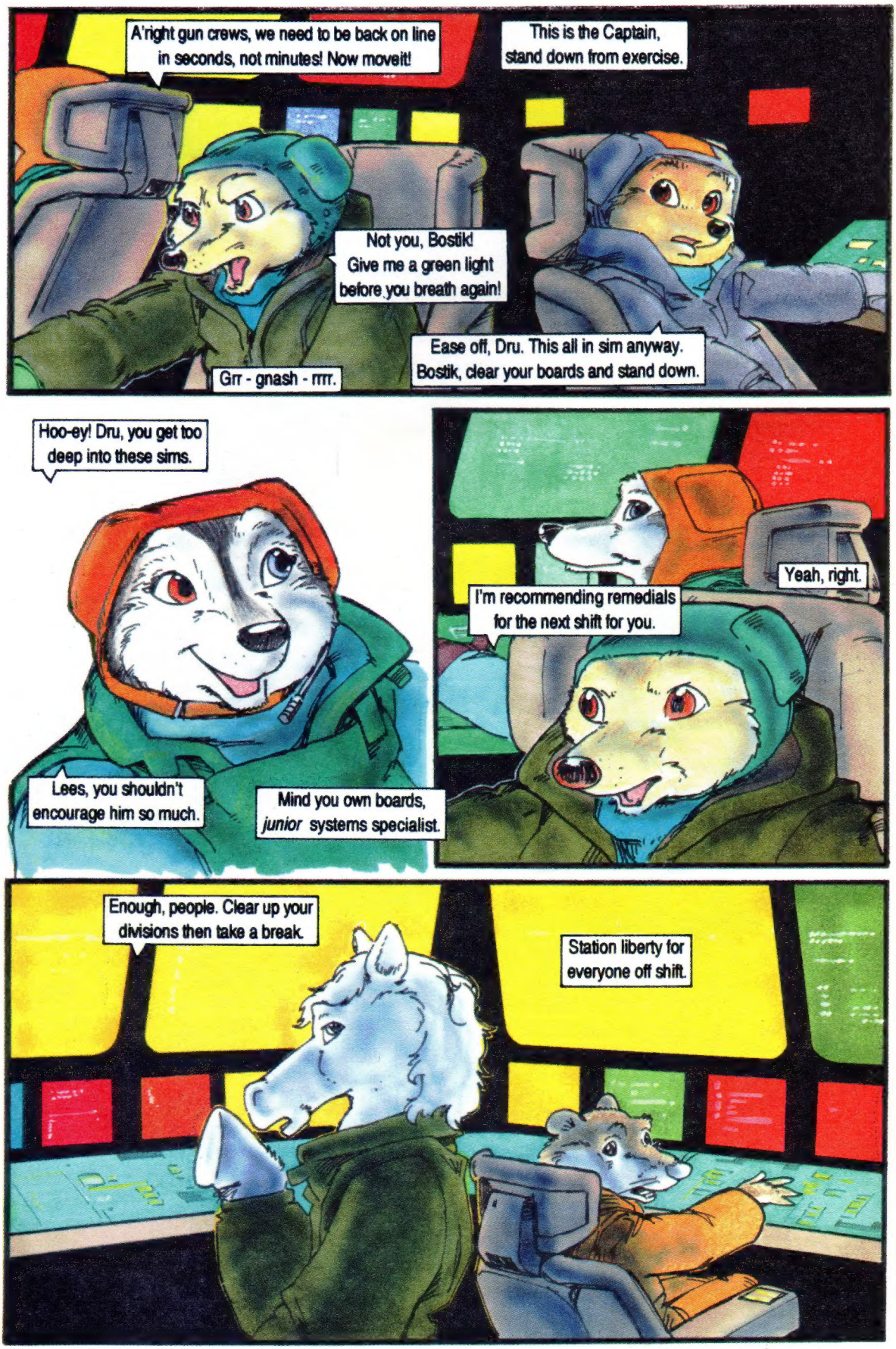
Oh, no. This is just a trickle, a few hundred tons. they're testing a focusing arrangement.


Beam is running and stabilized.
Test article is on its way.


Intercept in ten seconds.
Telemetry is good.

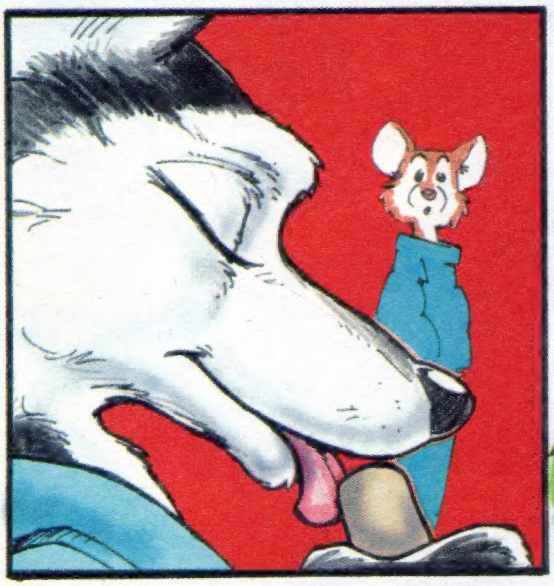

Final velocity is 114. 3 kilometers seconds.
Intercept.

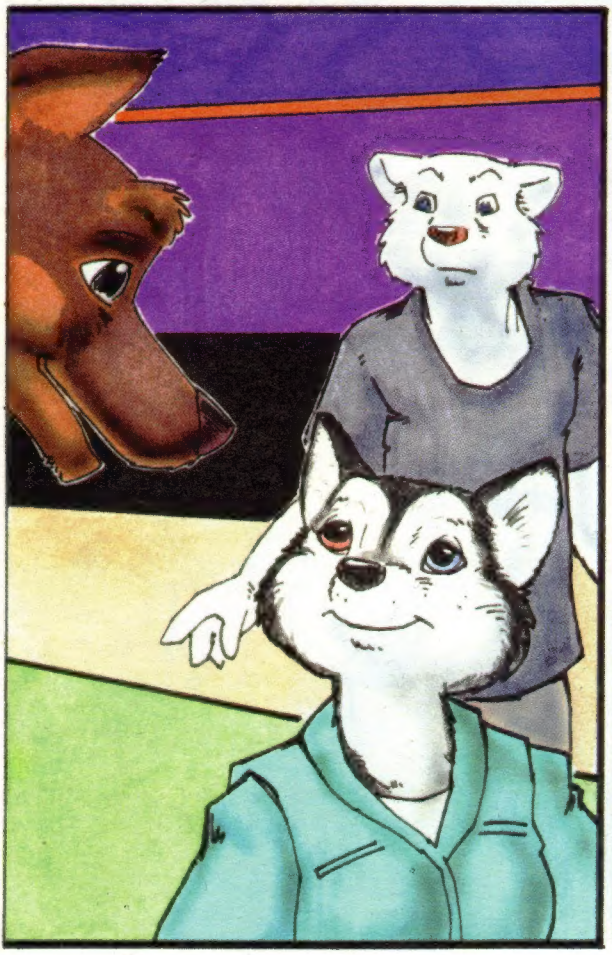

Intercept confirmed.
Test article is completely destroyed.
Down range detectors show minimal perturbation.

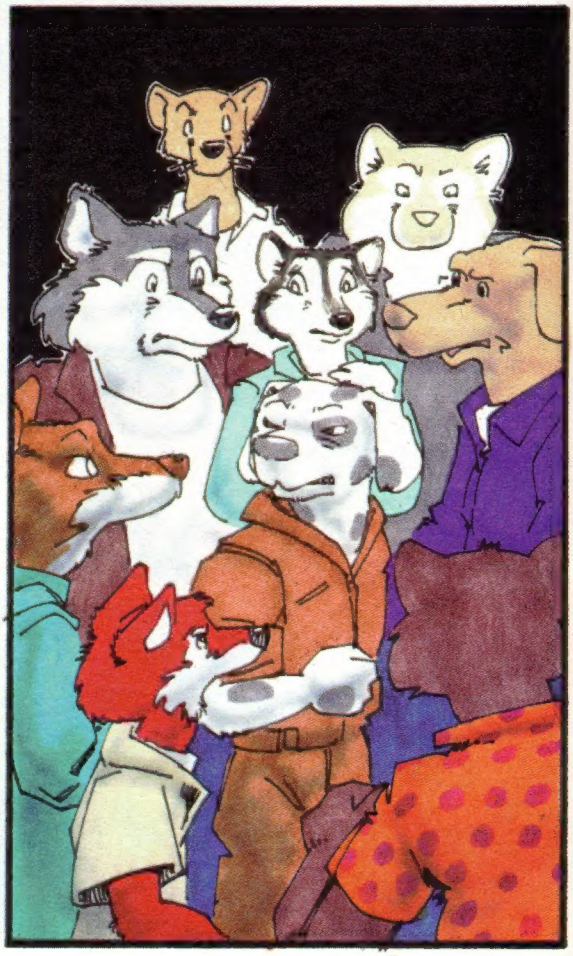

A'right gun crews, we need to be back on line in seconds, not minutes! Now moveit!
This is the Captain, stand down from exercise.
Not you, Bostik! Give me a green light before you breath again!
Ease off, Dru. This all in sim anyway. Bostik, clear your boards and stand down.
Grr - gnash - rrrr.
Hoo-ey! Dru, you get too deep into these sims.
Yeah, right.
I'm recommending remedials for the next shift for you.
Lees, you shouldn't encourage him so much.
Mind you own boards, *junior* systems specialist.
Enough, people. Clear up your divisions then take a break.
Station liberty for everyone off shift.

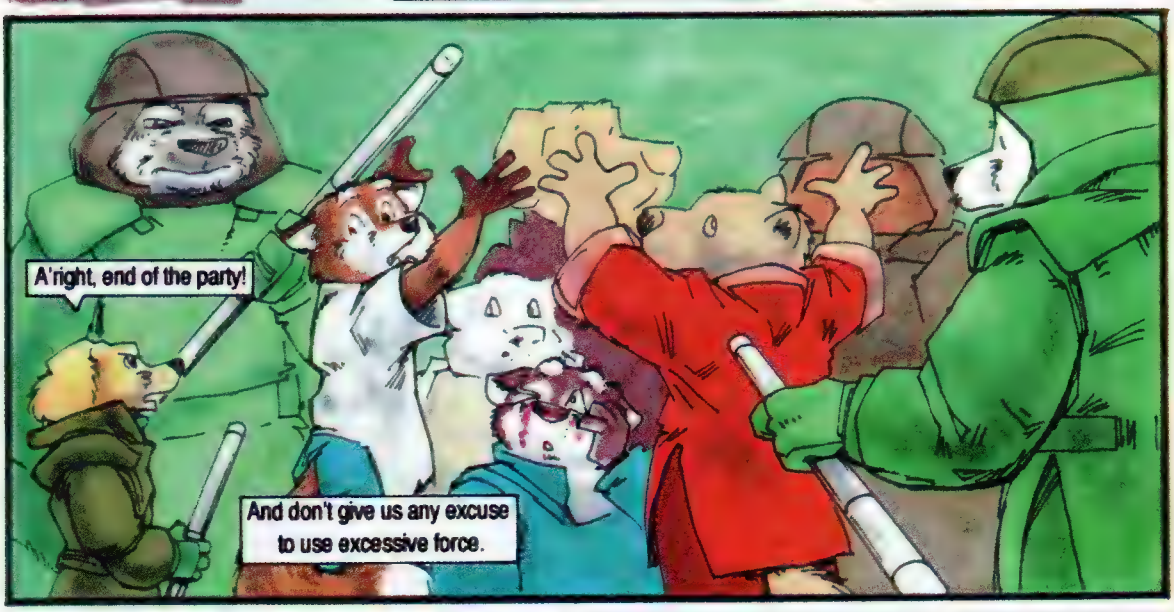
Break time! Come Ilyna, let's go to the station.
Get away from Dru's security drills for a while.
Thank you no. Have some reports to process.

You'll miss the fun.
Now you stay out of trouble.
Me? Trouble? Never happen








A'right, end of the party!
And don't give us any excuse to use excessive force.

Frieda! Good thing there's a recall back to the ship or we'd not be here for you!
Why do I have to continually get you out of trouble?

Because you love me dearly, you silly bug!
erk!

Is everyone aboard?

The last security team in. Everyone accounted for.

Station security signals their approval.

Mooring systems clear for release.

Alright, alert for release and maneuvering.

Release now.

Initial maneuvering reactors on line now.

Beginning thrust; point five meters.

When we get clear, head for the jump coordinates at an initial thrust of ten meters.

Ten meters?

Ten meters until we match jump profile.

And I want a complete communications blackout starting now.

Give everyone a few minutes to settle in after fallout and than I'll want to address the ship.

Ooooph!

That is odd - a ten-meter acceleration.

I would recommend we report to our stations.

Attention all crew. Attention all crew. Captain's address.

uhoh.

Captain Arrat here. We have just gotten word that on SD 200-09-20, ILR forces attacked Domthant III. Several ACVs hit population centers, inflicting heavy casualties.

While there has been no official reaction from the ILR, it is assumed that this was an intentional act of war. We are proceeding on that assumption and will assist in a joint Homeguard/EDF task force being assembled as a counterforce.

We will begin battle station drills in seventy-two hours. More complete information will be on line shortly.

The EDF vessel seems determined in her pursuit.

Navigator, have we progressed to a position advantageous to our evasive endeavors?

Given the probability error in it, I think so, sir.

Engineering, are you prepared to assist?

Yes, Captain.

I have the possible jump route on my boards.

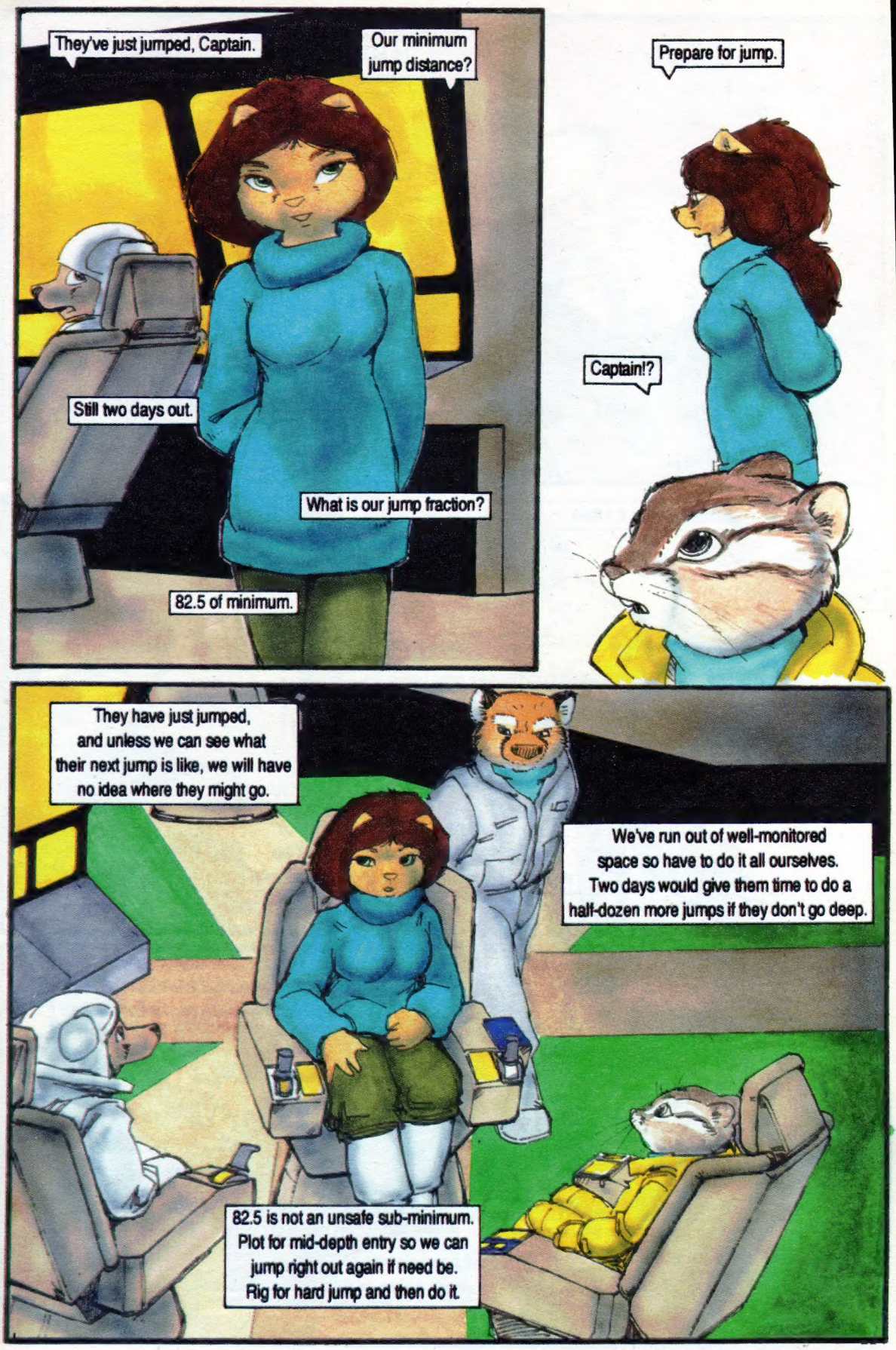
We, should have at lest two good jumps on the initial charge, and can retop-off the system in the few minutes each nav fix will take.

How is our over all fuel situation?

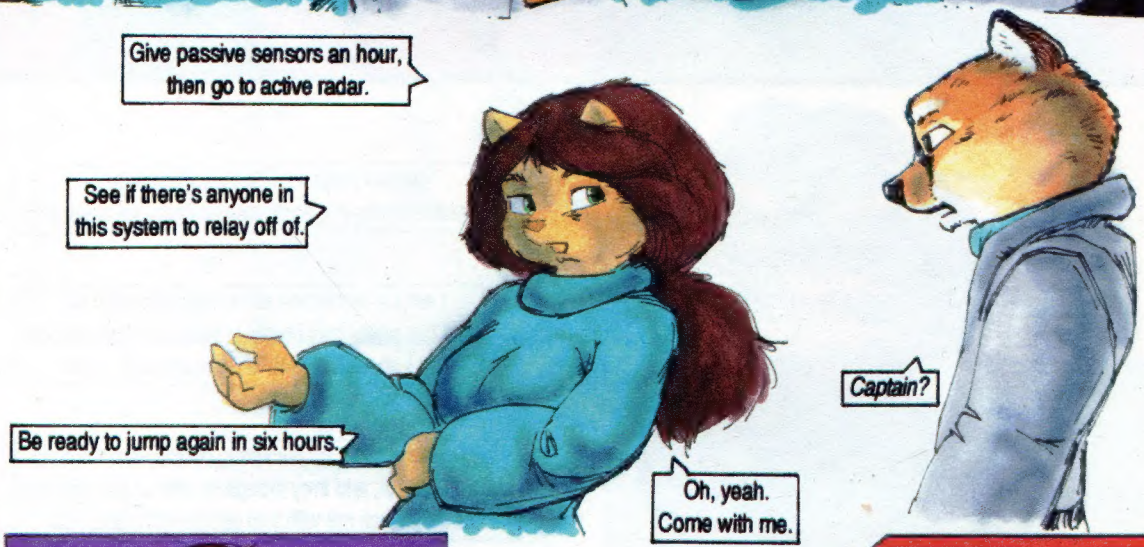
We have more than enough to make it home doing a lot of skip-jumps and a bit of patience. But not enough for any other maneuvering.

But I have a plan, if you will indulge me. But I think it can wait until after we get out of here.

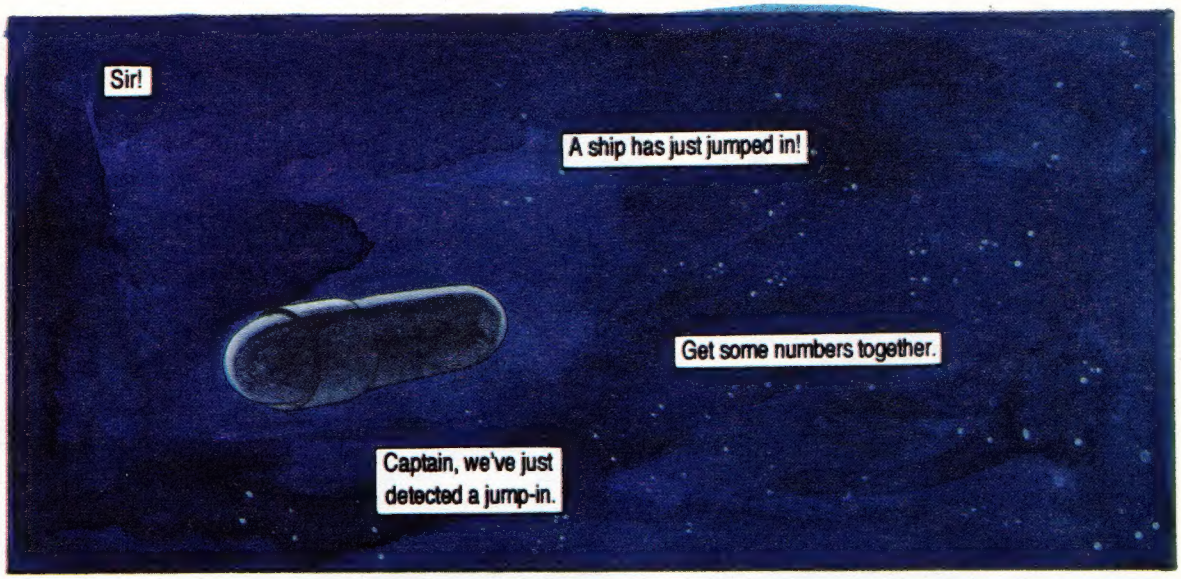
Very well. Prepare for jump.

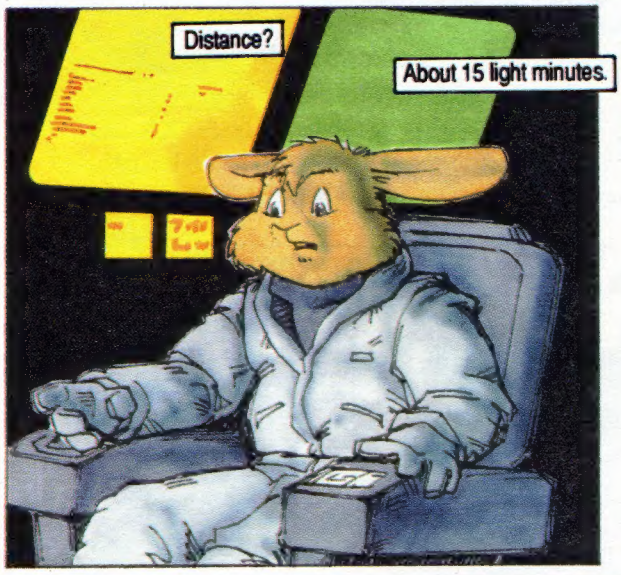

They've just jumped, Captain.
Our minimum jump distance?
Still two days out.
What is our jump fraction?
82.5 of minimum.
Prepare for jump.
Captain!?
They have just jumped, and unless we can see what their next jump is like, we will have no idea where they might go.
We've run out of well-monitored space so have to do it all ourselves. Two days would give them time to do a half-dozen more jumps if they don't go deep.
82.5 is not an unsafe sub-minimum. Plot for mid-depth entry so we can jump right out again if need be. Rig for hard jump and then do it.

Nagai.
Something you need?
BOOM
Just wondering what's -
-happening to the ship.


Give passive sensors an hour, then go to active radar.
See if there's anyone in this system to relay off of.
Be ready to jump again in six hours.
Oh, yeah.
Come with me.
Captain?

Alright?
I'm wondering if you are losing your perspective?
Jeopardizing the ship for personal passion?

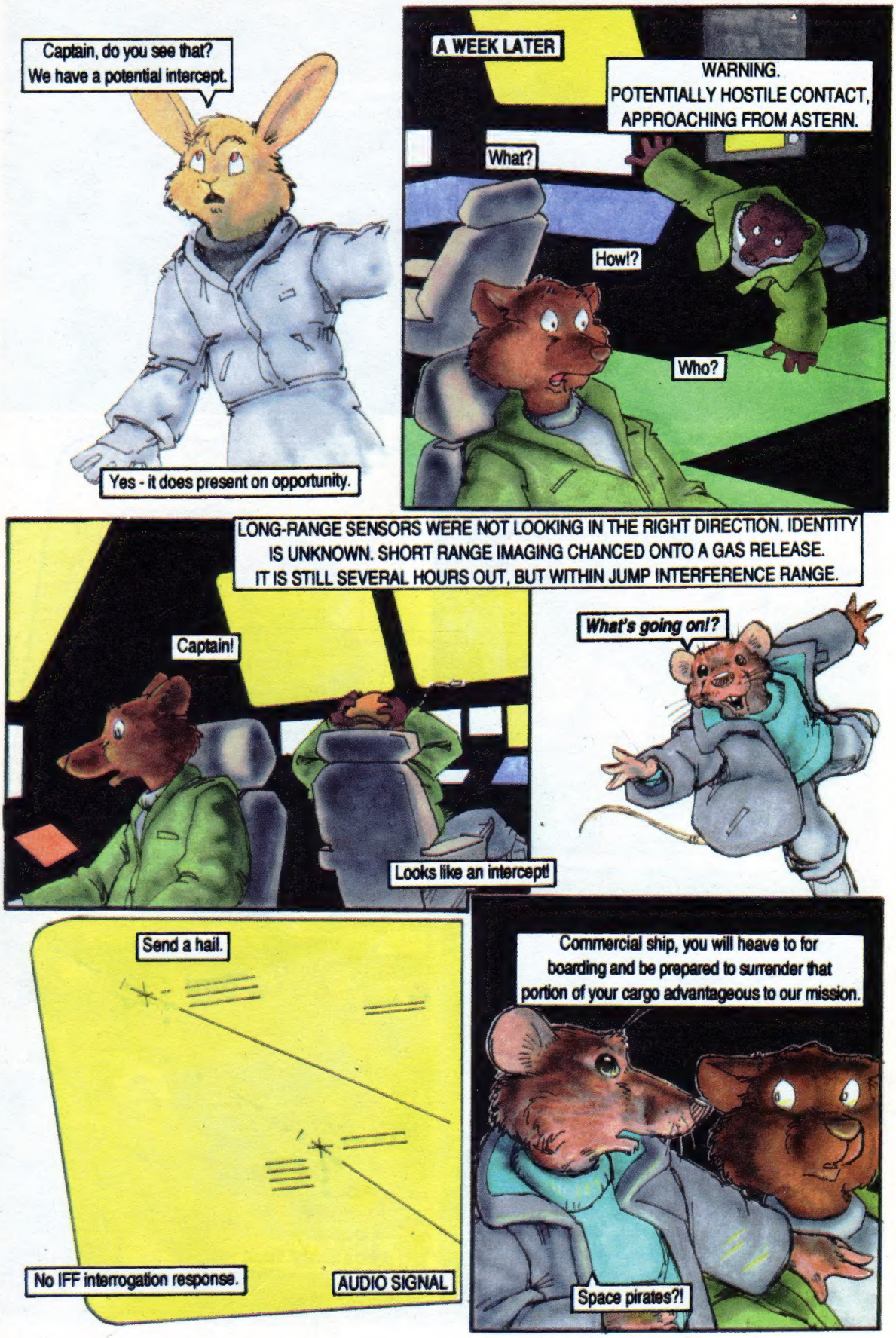

Sir!
A ship has just jumped in!
Get some numbers together.
Captain, we've just detected a jump-in.


Distance?
About 15 light minutes.

We don't have a vector on it yet, but it could be in a fairly good position.

Evasive options?
Yes, but our fuel projections could be better.

I've got a track on the ship.
Sir, we have a track. It looks like a civil, doing a through transit.


Captain, do you see that? We have a potential intercept.
Yes - it does present on opportunity.
A WEEK LATER
WARNING. POTENTIALLY HOSTILE CONTACT, APPROACHING FROM ASTERN.
What?
How!?
Who?
LONG-RANGE SENSORS WERE NOT LOOKING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. IDENTITY IS UNKNOWN. SHORT RANGE IMAGING CHANCED ONTO A GAS RELEASE. IT IS STILL SEVERAL HOURS OUT, BUT WITHIN JUMP INTERFERENCE RANGE.
Captain!
Looks like an intercept!
What's going on!?
Send a hail.
No IFF interrogation response.
AUDIO SIGNAL
Commercial ship, you will heave to for boarding and be prepared to surrender that portion of your cargo advantageous to our mission.
Space pirates?!